

The Eight Great Noble Thoughts and *Papanca* [Proliferation] and *Nippapanca* [Non-proliferation]

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“Mankind delights in the diffuseness of the world, the Perfect Ones are free from such diffuseness.” (*The Dhammapada* Verse 254) (Source: *Buddhist Dictionary*, Venerable Nyanatiloka Maha Thera)

Attha-maha-purisa Vitakka The Eight Great Noble Thoughts

In *Bhavana Vandana: Devotions for Meditation*, Bhante Henepola Gunaratana lists the *Attha-maha-purisa Vitakka* The Eight Great Noble Thoughts on pages 68 and 69.

Attha-maha-purisa Vitakka

1. *Appicchassayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo mahicchassa.*
2. *Santutthassayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo asantutthassa.*
3. *Pavivittassayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo Sanghanikaramassa.*
4. *Araddhaviriyaassayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo kusitassa.*
5. *Upatthitasatissayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo mutthassatissa.*
6. *Samahitassayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo asamahitassa.*
7. *Pannavato ayam Dhammo, nayam Dhammo duppannassa.*
8. *Nippapancaramassayam Dhammo nippapancarato nayam Dhammo papancaramassa papancarato.*

***Aṭṭha-mahā-purisa Vitakka* with Diacriticals**

1. *Appicchassāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo mahicchassa.*
2. *Santutṭhassāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo asantutṭhassa.*
3. *Pavivittassāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo Saṅghaṇikārāmaṣṣa.*
4. *Āraddhaviriyaassāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo kusītassa.*
5. *Upaṭṭhitasatissāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo mutṭhassatissa.*
6. *Samāhitassāyaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo asamāhitassa.*
7. *Paññāvato ayaṃ Dhammo, nāyaṃ Dhammo duppaññaṣṣa.*
8. *Nippapañcārāmaṣṣāyaṃ Dhammo nippapañcaratino nāyaṃ Dhammo papañcārāmaṣṣa papañcaratino*

Eight Great Noble Thoughts

1. This *Dhamma* is for reducing desire, not for increasing desire.
2. This *Dhamma* is for increasing contentment, not for increasing discontentment.
3. This *Dhamma* is for cultivating seclusion, not for becoming sociable.
4. This *Dhamma* is for becoming energetic, not for becoming lazy.
5. This *Dhamma* is for developing mindfulness, not developing unmindfulness.
6. This *Dhamma* is for developing composure, not for making restlessness.
7. This *Dhamma* is for increasing wisdom, not for decreasing wisdom.
8. This *Dhamma* is for delighting in freedom from impediments, not for delighting in impediment.

Note 42 on page 212 of *Bhavana Vandana* is

Aṭṭhamahāpurisa Vitakka: Aṅuttara Nikāya, 4:232 [Aṭṭhakanipāto, §30.15]. Eight Great Noble Thoughts: “The Venerable Anuruddha,” in Gradual Sayings, 4:157 [§3.10(30)].

Bhante Henepola Gunaratana also includes these lists on pages 92 and 93 of *Buddhist Suttas for Recitation: A Companion for Walking the Buddha's Path*. His note on page 265 is

Aṅuttara Nikāya, 4:232 [Aṭṭhakanipāto, §30.15]. “The Venerable Anuruddha,” in Gradual Sayings, 4:157 [§3.10(30)].

AN 8.30 Anguttara Nikaya Anuruddha Mahavitakka Sutta

In the *Anuruddha Mahavitakka Sutta* in the *Anguttara Nikaya* Book of Eights, Venerable Anuruddha, ‘the master of the divine eye’, is in silent contemplation. His ruminations are being monitored from a distance by the Buddha. These seven thoughts occur to Venerable Anuruddha.

At this time, Venerable Anuruddha had not yet attained enlightenment. The Buddha then projects himself and after saying *Sadhu, Sadhu*, Anuruddha (Well done, or it is good, Anuruddha), asks Anuruddha to add an eighth thought: This Dhamma is for the *nippapanca*, not for the *pappanca*. *Pappanca* means proliferation. Diffusion, the ‘more and more and more’ of the world. *Nippapanca* is non-proliferation. It is a synonym for *Nibbana*. It is *vijja*, supreme knowledge (opposite of *avijja*, Ignorance). Thus, the seven thoughts of Venerable Anuruddha became the Eight Thoughts of the Great Man.

The seven thoughts that occurred to Anuruddha, along with their correspondence to The Eightfold Path, the Five Faculties and Five Powers, are given below:

1. This *Dhamma* is for one of few wants, not for one who wants much.
2. This *Dhamma* is for the contented, not for the discontented.
3. This *Dhamma* is for the secluded, not for one who loves company.
These three correspond to *sila* (morality) for a person who has left home and ordained in order to attain enlightenment. For lay people *sila* is Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood of the Noble Eightfold Path. It ties in with *saddha*, (faith in the Buddha) vis-a-vis the Five Spiritual Faculties and the Five Powers.
4. This *Dhamma* is for the energetic, not for one who lacks energy.
Corresponds to Right Effort (*Samma Vayama*) of the Eightfold Path and *viriya* of the Spiritual Faculties and Spiritual Powers.
5. This *Dhamma* is for the mindful, not for one who lacks mindfulness.
Corresponds to Right Mindfulness (*Samma Sati* of the Eightfold Path and *sati* of the Five Spiritual Faculties and Five Powers.
6. This *Dhamma* is for the concentrated, not for the unconcentrated.
Corresponds to *Samma Samadhi* of the Eightfold Path and *samadhi* of the other two as above.
7. This *Dhamma* is for the wise, not for the unwise.
Corresponds to Right Understanding (*Samma Ditthi*) and Right Thought (*Samma Samkappa*) of the Eightfold Path, and *panna* (wisdom) of the other two.

Panca Indriya The Five Spiritual Faculties

The normal mind is driven by the three unwholesome roots of *lobha* (Greed), *dosa* (Hate), and *moha* (Delusion). When a person embarks on the teachings of the Buddha, these three unwholesome roots are gradually replaced by the Five Spiritual Faculties (*indriya*). At this

stage, the practitioner can still be influenced and shaken by another person from some other teaching who might argue, that the Buddha was not really enlightened (the first of the Spiritual Faculties is faith in the enlightenment of the Buddha).

Panca Bala The Five Spiritual Powers

When a person attains to Stream Entry (*Sotapanna*), these Five Spiritual Faculties become the Five Spiritual Powers. Then these five cannot be shaken by their opposites. At Stream Entry, the first three of the Ten Fetters (*dasa samyojana*) drop away. The first three fetters are *sakkaya ditthi* (personality belief), *vicikiccha* (sceptical doubt), and *silabbata paramasa* (belief in wrongful rites and rituals).

Buddhist Dictionary by Nyanatiloka Maha Thera

Venerable Nyanatiloka *Maha Thera* explains *papanca* in his *Buddhist Dictionary* as:

papanca: (Sanskrit *prapanca*): In doctrinal usage, it signifies the expansion, differentiation, 'diffuseness' or 'manifoldness' of the world; and it may also refer to the 'phenomenal world' in general, and to the mental attitude of 'worldliness'. In A. IV, 173, it is said: "As far as the field of sixfold sense-impression extends, so far reaches the world of diffuseness (or the phenomenal world; *papancassa gati*); as far as the world of diffuseness extends, so far extends the field of sixfold sense-impression. Through the complete fading away and cessation of the field of sixfold sense-impression, there comes about the cessation and the coming-to-rest of the world of diffuseness (*papanca-nirodho papanca-vupasamo*).". The opposite term *nippapanca* is a name for *Nibbana* (S. LIII), in the sense of 'freedom from *samsaric* diffuseness'. - Dh. 254: "Mankind delights in the diffuseness of the world, the Perfect Ones are free from such diffuseness" (*papancabhirata paja, nippapanca tathagata*). - The 8th of the 'thoughts of a great man' (*maha-purisa-vitakka*; A. VIII, 30) has: "This *Dhamma* is for one who delights in non-diffuseness (the unworldly, *Nibbana*); it is not for him who delights in worldliness (*papanca*).". - For the psychological sense of 'differentiation', see M. 18 (*Madhupindika Sutta*): "Whatever man conceives (*vitakketi*) that he differentiates (*papanceti*); and what he differentiates, by reason thereof ideas and considerations of differentiation (*Papanca-sanna-sankha*) arise in him." On this text and the term *papanca*, see Dr. Kurt Schmidt in *German Buddhist Writers* (Wheel 74/75) p. 61ff. - See D. 21 (*Sakka's Quest*; Wheel 10, p. 12ff). In the commentaries, we often find a threefold classification *tanha, ditthi-, mana-papanca*, which probably means the world's diffuseness created by craving, false views and conceit. - See M. 123; A. IV, 173; A. VI, 14, Sn. 530, 874, 916. Nananda Bhikkhu, in *Concept and Reality: An Essay on Papanca and Papanca-sanna-sankha* (Kandy 1971, Buddhist Publication Society), suggests that the term refers to man's "tendency towards proliferation in the realm of concepts" and proposes a rendering by "conceptual proliferation," which appears convincing in psychological context, e.g. in two of the texts quoted above, A. IV, 173 and M. 18. - The threefold classification of *papanca*, by way of craving, false views and conceit, is explained by the author as three aspects, or instances, of the foremost of delusive conceptualisations, the ego-concept.

The Eight Great Noble Thoughts and *Papanca* [proliferation] and *Nippapanca* [non-proliferation] in The Pali Canon

AN Anguttara Nikaya

Anguttara Nikaya Anthology: An Anthology of Discourses from the Anguttara Nikaya. Selected and translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi. Earlier published as Wheel Publications 155-158; 208-211; 238-240. 2007. (Kandy Sri Lanka, BPS Buddhist Publication Society). (BP222) (ISBN 978-955-24-0297-5).

Chapter Eight The Chapter of the Eights 160 The Eights Thoughts of a Great Man, pages 142-147. Notes page 234.

<https://www.bps.lk/olib/bp/bp222s> Nyanaponika-Bodhi *Anguttara-Nikaya-Anthology.pdf*

Anguttara Nikaya Anthology: An Anthology of Discourses from the Anguttara Nikaya. Selected and translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2007. The note on page 234, includes the explanation by Bhikkhu Bodhi

“The Unworldly” = nippapanca; “worldliness” = papanca. Papanca “signifies the expansion, differentiation, diffuseness or manifoldness of the world; and it may also refer to the “phenomenal world’ in general and the mental attitude of “worldliness” (Nyanatiloka Thera, *Buddhist Dictionary*, (BPS), s.v. papanca). It is in the last-mentioned two senses that this term and its opposite, nippapanca, have been rendered here and in the concluding verses of this text. In his important book *Concept and Reality*, (BPS), Bhikkhu Nananda adds to the above-mentioned connotations the meaning “conceptual proliferation,” which provides the key for understanding the term when it occurs in a psychological context, as it often does in the Suttas. However, it seems improbable that this meaning applies to our present text.

The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara-Nikaya) or More Numbered Suttas Vol IV (The Books of the Sevens, Eights and Nines).

The Book of the Eights, 8.30 The Venerable Anuruddha, pages 154-160.

<https://palitextsociety.org/product/the-book-of-the-gradual-sayings-5-volumes/>

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya. Translated from the Pali: by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Book of the Eights, 30 (10) *Anuruddha Sutta*, pages 1160-1165. Notes page 1798.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/numerical-discourses-buddha/>

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya. Translated from the Pali: by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Book of the Fours, 173 (3) *Kotthita Sutta*, pages 539-540. Notes page 1710.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/numerical-discourses-buddha/>

Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: An Anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikaya.

Selected and translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi. 1999.

Chapter Eight The Chapter of the Eights 160 The Eights Thoughts of a Great Man, pages 208-212. Notes page 306.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/numerical-discourses-buddha/>

Wheel 208-211 *Anguttara Nikaya: An Anthology*: Part II. Selected and translated from the Pali by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi

The Chapter of the Eights: 51. The Eight Thoughts of a Great Man (8.30)

https://bps.lk/olib/wh/wh362_Hecker_Anuruddha--Master-of-the-Divine-Eye.html

Dhammapada

The Dhammapada clarifies *papanca* in Chapter 14 Buddha Vagga The Buddha Verses 195 and Chapter 18 Mala Vagga Impurities or Taints Verse 254.

The Dhammapada: Pali Text and Translation, with Stories in Brief and Notes. Venerable Narada Mahathera. Venerable Narada's Notes to Verses 195 and 196 on page 172 explains

Honour to whom Honour is Due

17-18 He who reverences those worthy of reverence., whether Buddhas or their disciples; those who have overcome the impediments and have got rid of grief and lamentation – the merit of him who reverences such peaceful and fearless Ones cannot be measured by anyone as such and such. Note 1 *Papanca* = impediments or obstacles such as attachment, false views and pride.

Venerable Narada's Notes to Verses 254 and 255 on page 208 explains *papanca* as

Impediments such as craving, pride etc.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha's Path to Freedom. Translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita Thera. Introduction by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Acharya Buddharakkhita Thera's Note to Verses 195 and 196 on page 69 explains

195–196. One who reveres those worthy of reverence, the Buddhas and their disciples, who have transcended all worldliness and passed beyond the reach of sorrow and lamentation—one who reveres such peaceful and fearless ones, his merit none can compute by any measure. 17–18

Acharya Buddharakkhita Thera's translation of Verse 254 and Note on page 82 are

254. There is no track in the sky, and no recluse outside (the Buddha's Dispensation). Humankind delights in worldliness, but the Buddhas are free from worldliness. 21 20 Note Recluse (*samana*): in vv.254-255 used in the special sense of those who have reached the four supramundane stages.

The PTS Pali Text Society's translation *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)* translates *papanca* as "the diversified world". This is explained in Note to Verse 195 on page 110.

DN Digha Nikaya

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya. Maurice Walsh translator. 1987.

Sutta 14 Mahapadana Sutta: The Great discourse on the Lineage, page 220. Note 315 page 563.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/connected-discourses-buddha/>

The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya. Maurice Walsh translator. 1987.

Sutta 21 Sakkapanha Sutta: Sakka's Questions: A God Consults the Buddha, page 329. Note 606 page 587.

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The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya. Maurice Walsh translator. 1987.

Sutta 34 Dasattara Sutta: Expanding Decades 2.1 Eight things greatly help, eight things are to be developed, pages 517-519. Notes 1153 and 1154 page 624.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/connected-discourses-buddha/>

MN Majjhima Nikaya

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya.

Translated from the Pali: Original Translation by Bhikkhu Nanamoli: Translation Edited and Revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Sutta 11 Culasihanada Sutta: The Shorter Discourse on the Lion's Roar, 11.5 page 160. Note 169 page 1195.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/middle-length-discourses-buddha/>

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya.

Translated from the Pali: Original Translation by Bhikkhu Nanamoli: Translation Edited and Revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Sutta 18 Madhupindika Sutta: The Honeyball, 18.8 and 18.16 pages 202 and 204-205.

Notes 229 and 232 pages 1202-1205.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/middle-length-discourses-buddha/>

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Milinda's Questions. 2 Volumes. (Translated from the Pali by I. B. Horner) 1991 reprint of 1964. Volume II.

The Dilemmas VII Seventh Division 1: Diversifications, pages 76-80.

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SN Samyutta Nikaya

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya.

Translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2000. (Volume II)

Part IV The Book of the Six Sense Bases (*Salayatana-vagga*), Chapter I *Salyatanasamyutta* Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Bases; Division II. The Second Fifty; V The Sixes 94 (1) Untamed, Unguarded, pages 1173-1175. Note 71 page 1409.

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Translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2000. (Volume II)

Part IV *The Book of the Six Sense Bases (Salayatana-vagga)*, Chapter I *Salyatanasamyutta* Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Bases; Division II. The Second Fifty; IV The Vipers 248 (11) The Sheaf of Barley, page 1259.

<https://wisdomexperience.org/product/connected-discourses-buddha/>

Sn Sutta Nipata in KN Khuddaka Nikaya

The Group of Discourses: Sutta-Nipata. Volume II. Revised Translation with Introduction and Notes by K. R. Norman. 1992.

Verses 530, 874 and 916.

<https://palitextsociety.org/product/the-group-of-discourses/>

The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha's Discourses Together with its Commentaries. Translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi. 2017.

Verses 530, 874 and 916.

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Wheel 82 *The Discourse Collection: Selected Texts from the Suttanipata*

Translated by John D. Ireland

https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh082_Ireland_Selected-Suttanipata-Texts.html

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Chapter Seven: Small Chapter, 7 The Destruction of Diversifications, page 157. Notes pages 162-163.

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The Udana Commentary. 2 Volumes. Translated by Peter Masefield. Volume II. 1995.

Chapter Seven: Small Chapter, 7 The Destruction of Diversifications, pages 963-966. Notes pages 994-995.

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Translated by John D. Ireland. 1997.

7.7 The Destruction of Proliferation page 92-93 Notes pages 212-213.s

https://www.bps.lk/olib/bp/bp214s_Ireland_Udana-Itivuttaka.pdf

Papanca-sanna-sankha-pahana. This is a very difficult phrase of profound import and in the various contexts where it occurs it has been translated very differently. The stumbling block has been the important term papanca, which even the ancient commentators found difficult to define. I follow here Bhikkhu Nanananda's interpretation of it, in his Concept and Reality, as "conceptual proliferation." Through craving, conceit, and views we conceptualize what is perceived through the senses and by mind, distorting with fixed labels what is naturally a fluid "living" situation. The ordinary person measures and evaluates, chooses and rejects, the contents of his perceptions from the viewpoint of the ego or "self," the ultimate concept to be dissolved when enlightenment is realized. The Buddha, by abandoning craving and so forth, no longer conceptualizes in this way (see Dhammapada 195, 254).

Bodhicari Precepts

Bodhicaris who have taken the *Bodhicari* Precepts chant the *Attha-maha-purisa Vitakka* Eight Thoughts of a Great Being as part of their regular chanting. Dharma Vijaya Buddhist Vihara includes this in their chanting book *Buddha Vandana* in the Section Basics of Buddha's Teaching on pages 48 and 49.

Bodhicari Precepts

<https://www.buddhistgroupofkendal.co.uk/bodhicari-precepts/>

Bodhicari Precepts in Buddhism

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